



## MACRAO Best Practices for Mississippi College Fairs

College fairs serve as a great way for students and college reps to shake hands for the first time. They are a great introduction, but they tend to lack opportunities for students to create deeper connections and get answers to more complex questions. Meaningful relationships with college reps are necessary for students to make informed decisions, therefore, it is important for these fairs to be organized, efficient, and hosted with the intent to foster those relationships. Please consider the following best practices that colleges and universities across the state of Mississippi have expressed as needs for success and sustainability:

- **Less college fairs means more exposure.**
  - Neighboring states host less than 100 official, regional, or consolidated college fairs within their respective states.
  - It is physically impossible for in-state institutions to meet the demands of an over-abundance of college fairs. Fewer college fairs also increases the likelihood that out-of-state institutions can attend.
  - Cooperate, coordinate, and consolidate. Put together planning committees of counselors, career coaches, and local community partners. Reach out to the local community colleges, universities, or other entities and work with the other schools in your area to find a central location to host all the schools in an area for ONE event.
  - Please consider inviting individual college reps to your campus to privately visit with those students who are interested rather than planning multiple college fairs for the same students in a year.
- **College reps have limited resources and materials.**
  - The information and material/literature colleges and universities distribute about their programs and scholarships is often only relevant for a year – two at best – before it completely changes.
  - College fairs should only include Juniors and Seniors at your school as those students are the target audience for what can be accomplished in the college fair setting.
  - A college fair is unlikely to be the kind of “exposure” younger students need. Please refrain from sending students any younger than high school juniors through a fair.
  - College fairs and the material/giveaways college reps bring are for students. If teachers, counselors, or other administrators would like information, literature, or “swag,” please contact the institution directly or visit the institution’s online bookstores to purchase pennants, posters, pompoms, and t-shirts
- **College fairs rarely need more than two to three hours to accomplish their objective.**
  - Depending on the size of the venue and the number of students attending the fair, there is often no reason why a fair should exceed two to three hours.
  - Additionally, please consider hospitality as you will be hosting recruiters from colleges, universities, and local businesses. These individuals are using their voices for two to three hours at a time and may need a break to hydrate or use the restroom. Please provide those amenities.
  - For longer fairs (where necessary) or fairs that would interfere with breakfast or lunch, please consider providing a meal for reps. When meals/refreshments are provided, please consider dietary restrictions that your guests may have. It is not uncommon for reps/guests to be unable to eat due to allergies or dietary restrictions during fairs.
  - Please provide an itinerary to college reps for which schools are attending and when, how long each wave of students is, when breaks are provided, etc.